CTC NEWSLETTER

February 2005

DO'S & DON'TS IN THE ONLINE JOB SEARCH

- *Use your home computer and keep your virus controls updated.*

- *Follow directions!*

- *Tailor your communications for each recipient.*

- *Make sure your communication projects a positive and professional image.*

- *Proof read & proof read again!*

- *Make it easy for the recipient to receive and respond to you.*

NETIQUETTE, TECHNETIQUETTE, & E-MANNERS IN THE JOB SEARCH
- Prepared by the CTC Staff

In the 21st Century, much of your job search research and correspondence will be done on the Internet. Even some of your networking can now be done on the Internet. Although you can do all your Internet work at home wearing wrinkled flannel pajamas and saggy old socks, you still need to remember that the documents and messages you send into cyberspace represent you and give others an impression of you.

The notes that follow are intended to help you project a professional and positive image in your Internet communications – even if you haven't brushed your hair all day.

Tailor Your Product To The Recipient
Avoid mass mailing, also known as "blasting," your job applications. There are several important reasons for this advice. First and most important, personalized messages are much more effective. Career counselors and coaches advise their clients to customize each cover letter and resume to the particular job, company, or industry.

Second, e-mails sent to many addressees may get rejected by Spam filters. If you are identified as a spammer, the recipient may "blacklist" you (and your company if you're working on an office computer!), effectively blocking all messages from you (and, possibly, your company).

Third, if you are using mail merge, it often does not translate well from Microsoft Outlook into Outlook Express. When the recipient receives a message beginning "Dear <namespace.mailmerge-microsoft-com:office>" or other gobbledygook they are going to know they have been mass mailed.

Be sure that your own virus protection software is up-to-date and active. If you are attaching your resume to an e-mail, scan it for viruses before you send it. Sending the employer a virus will pretty much scuttle your chances to be hired!

Feature story continued....

Follow Application Directions

Make sure you follow the application directions. Not following the directions makes you look stupid or careless -- definitely **_not_** the image you are trying to project!

Check the company website. There are often very explicit instructions to follow on their "Career" pages. In fact, many companies will direct you to their website as the only place to submit an application.

"Men have become the tools of their tools."

- Henry David Thoreau

If the job advertisement or the website specifies that applicants should not send their resumes as e-mail attachments, then don't do it. It's a good idea to avoid attachments in general as some companies and individuals block all e-mails with attachments in order to avoid viruses. Many people delete e-mails with attachments if they do not know the sender.

If you do attach your resume to an e-mail, ensure that the recipient will be able to read it by asking what format you should use before you send it – in MS Word or as a PDF file, for instance. Never attach your resume as a compressed file unless instructed to do so by the employer.

Here's some more advice that applies to cyberspace and all other space: Employers really hate receiving applications from job seekers who are clearly not qualified for the job. Read the qualifications section of the job advertisement very carefully. CareerXRoads recently published a list of humorous New Years resolutions in their January 2005 *CXR Newsletter*. Two of the resolutions for job seekers were:

"I promise (Job Seeker) to read the position description before applying -- as long as it is written to the educational level I am expected to have."

"I promise (Job Seeker) to stop applying for positions where I'm clearly not minimally qualified -- as long as the position's requirements are clearly described, prioritized, confirmed at the beginning of the application process and offer immediate feedback on the initial 'screen'."

Chose Your Tools Wisely

It is best to use a personal e-mail address and to access it from a computer outside your workplace. If you send your e-mails to a prospective employer from your office e-mail address, the prospective employer is going to know that you are taking your current employer's time to apply for other jobs. If your current employer monitors company e-mails (and many do!), s/he may worry that you are leaking company secrets and other proprietary information to her/his competitor. In any event, it is wise to keep your personal e-mail address book and job search documents on your home computer where you can access them no matter who you are working for.

Subject Line

The subject line of the e-mail may determine whether the message is opened and read, forgotten and left to waste away in the recipient's in box, or simply deleted. Never leave the subject line blank.

The subject line should be short – 4 to 6 words, less than 35 characters. It should include more than just the job title, just the job number, or just your name. It should be pertinent, honest, and profes-

Feature story continued....

sionally worded, but still attract the attention of the recipient. "Resume" may not be opened immediately by a nonprofit specializing in international development, but "Experienced Micro-enterprise Project Manager" might be.

Avoid using symbols and punctuation in the subject line, especially exclamation points which could trigger a Spam blocker. Other Spam triggers in the subject line include words like "free," "great offer," "important," or "information" – i.e., words that are frequently used in the subject lines of actual Spam messages. A lot of numbers in the subject line may also trigger a Spam blocker.

Your E-Mail Address
Your e-mail address should be simple, professional, and easily recognized as yours. It is helpful to the recipient if your e-mail address includes your surname. For instance, HolmesS@bakerstreet.com is a much better choice than bigpipesmoker@bakerstreet.com. If your home e-mail address is too informal and your service provider only allows you one address, then get a free Hot Mail or Yahoo account with a more appropriate address.

Also note that a lot of num-

bers in your e-mail address may trigger a Spam blocker. For instance, HolmesS54@bakerstreet.com would be a better choice than HolmesS1854@bakerstreet.com.

Addressing Your E-Mail
Have you ever pressed "Send" accidentally before your message was completely written or ready? To avoid a potentially disastrous slip, draft your message first, then fill in the recipients' addresses. Trying to recall a message sent by mistake makes you look careless and disorganized.

Be careful about hitting the "Reply to All" button. Check all three address lines ("To," "CC," and "BCC") to make sure you know to whom you are replying when you push the "Reply" button.

You may want to copy (CC) others involved as a professional courtesy and to keep them in the loop. For instance, when sending a message to a hiring manager, you could copy the company recruiter who pre-screened you. Another example would be to copy the person who referred you when writing to introduce yourself to a hiring manager.

If you are sending an e-mail

to many recipients who do not know each other (hopefully, this would not be a job search message), then it may be best to use your own address for the "To" line and "BCC" for the recipients addresses for several reasons. First, if a recipient prints out your message, it won't take several pages of paper to print the "To" section. Second, it's a matter of privacy. Most people do not want their private e-mail address to be publicized to lots of people they don't know.

Always labeling your messages as "urgent" can annoy recipients, so use that feature judiciously.

Some career counselors and coaches recommend that you do not attach a "RR" or "Return Receipt" feature to your e-mails, as certain types of RR features can be perceived by recipients as irritating or intrusive.

"A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history — with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila."

- Mitch Radcliffe

Feature story continued….

"Smash head on keyboard to continue."

- Unknown

Technical Aspects of Formatting the Message

Make sure that your e-mail messages – whether they include cover letters and resumes or not -- are neatly formatted. We recommend that you e-mail it to another address (to another account of your own or to a friend or family member) just to see how it comes out on the other end. Many recipients can only receive your beautifully crafted resume in "plain text" format that can significantly affect the appearance of your document.

It is best to use "plain text" or "ASCII" text in your e-mails – simply select "Format" and choose "plain" (not "rich") text. Another good reason to use "plain text" is that it takes up less space or kilobytes. Space can be very important to a recruiter who receives several hundred e-mails a day.

Whether you use "plain" or "rich" text, always use black font on a white background in normal e-mail size (10) and font style (Arial, Helvetica, Times Roman).

Indentations and tabs rarely come out correctly on the recipient's end of the message. Justify everything to the left, avoiding the centering feature and tabbed columns. Avoid underlining, bolding, and bulleting. (Note: You can still create bullets with lower-case o's, plus signs, dashes, or asterisks.) Avoid colors and graphics. Bright or dark backgrounds with colorful fonts in the text of your message may also trigger Spam blockers. Backgrounds and graphics can also require the recipient to change it to "plain text" in order to respond.

Your lines should be no longer than 60 characters. Your recipient may not have a "word wrap" feature and receive your 150 skillfully crafted words on 150 hard-to-read lines. (FYI: in some e-mail software, you can set your own "word wrap" limits.)

Use "white space" in your e-mail to make it easier to read. Leave blank lines between paragraphs.

Style, Content, & Formatting

The Internet is a public place. Never assume your e-mail messages are private. Don't include anything in your messages that couldn't be read by everyone (including your mama!) or broadcast on "60 Minutes."

Any written communications regarding your job search should be considered formal business correspondence, even if it is e-

mail. Maintain formality with people you don't know well. If the employer is informal, don't assume that you should be, too.

Capitalizing words in the body of an e-mail is called "shouting" in cyberspace and is generally inappropriate in a business communication except to highlight a title or heading. Although the use of acronyms is very common in e-mails, they are inappropriate in business correspondence and, besides, too many of them can annoy your reader. Some of the most frequently used are FYI = for your information and BTW = by the way.

Always include a salutation (Dear Mr. Holmes:) and a closing (Sincerely, Dr. Watson). Include your "signature" at the bottom of your e-mail message. This signature usually includes your full name and your e-mail address. It may also include your mailing address and telephone and fax numbers, but don't exceed 4 to 6 lines. An example would be:

Sherlock Holmes
Detective Extraordinaire
Telephone: xxx-xxx-xxxx
E-mail:
HolmesS@bakerstreet.com

Proof read your message before pressing "Send" and use "Spell Check" if that is available to you. (Note: You can compose the message in word processing, then copy and paste it into an e-mail.) Ask a friend to double

Feature story continued….

check your work. And ***don't just use "Spell Check!!"*** Read it carefully several times for mistakes like "there" instead of "their" which will not be caught by "Spell Check" and make you look like a high school freshman who is not paying attention!

Another reason to read your e-mail several times before sending is to make sure that the tone of your message is respectful and friendly, not curt and presumptuous. The tone of a written message is very important. The recipient cannot see the smile or frown on your face.   Be careful when using humor and sarcasm as they may be received differently by e-mail than in person. Do not use tacky little "emoticons" like :) for happy or :(for sad in business correspondence.

Even when e-mailed, a resume should be accompanied by a personalized cover letter. In the cover letter you need to state what job you are applying for. Keep the cover letter as short or shorter than you would in a snail mail product. You don't want the recipient to have to scroll down screen after screen to read your cover letter, but you do want to sell yourself effectively.

Snail Mail Back-Ups
Follow up your most important e-mail communications with an employer with a hard copy version via regular mail. You never know when an e-mail gets lost in cyberspace.

Always send your cover letter and resume by e-mail <u>and</u> snail mail. The hard copy of a cover letter and resume can look a lot more elegant than your e-mailed version. And it jogs the employer's memory and gives him something to pass around to other colleagues involved in selection.

Some applicants now send a scannable version of their resume with the snail mail version so the recipient can add it to their company's electronic database.

Responding By E-Mail
Respond promptly – usually within 2 days. It is usually a good idea to "quote" as it will remind the recipient of your previous discussions. "Quoting" happens when you receive an e-mail and your response includes that original e-mail in it. This is also referred to as the message "thread." To avoid "quoting" you would start a new e-mail to respond.

Many e-mail programs have the "quoting" turned off as a default setting. In order to change it in Outlook Express, go to "Options," select the "Send" tab, then check the box that says "Include message in re-ply."

When They Don't Write, They Don't Call…
Be very frugal with your follow-up messages. Recruiters and employers can receive hundreds of applications every day. Check the application instructions. Many state that the employer will only respond to candidates who are called for interviews. Don't demand a response, simply remind the employer that you are still very interested and highlight one or two of your qualifications. Most career counselors and coaches recommend that you limit your follow-up communications to once every month or 6 weeks.

In Summary
The main message you should take away from this article is that job search communication over the internet is business communication and represents you. Make sure that the image you project into cyberspace is the image you want a potential employer to receive. Be courteous and be careful.

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

- Peter Steiner, The New Yorker, 5 July 1993

Editor's Notes

Here are some additional sources of information on technetiquette:

Crispin, Gerry and Mehler, Mark
"Staffing Resolutions for 2005"
CXR Update – January 2005 (www.careerxroads.com)

Baldrige, Letitia
New Complete Guide To Executive Manners
Rawson Associates, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985

Graber, Steven
The Everything Online Job Search Book
Adams Media Corporation, 2000

Hansen, Katharine
"Common Sense Steps Can Prevent Employer Backlash Against Online Resumes"
Quintessential Careers (www.quintcareers.com)

Hansen, Randall S.
"Tips for a Dynamic Email Cover Letter"
Quintessential Careers (www.quintcareers.com)

"Keep Your E-Mail (and Resume) Out of the Spam Filters"
Job-Hunt.Org (www.job-hunt.org)

"E-Mailed Cover Letters"
Job-Hunt.Org (www.job-hunt.org)

Joyce, Susan P.
"Making E-mail Work for Your Job Search"
Job-Hunt.Org (www.job-hunt.org)

Joyce, Susan P.
"The Unwritten Rules of Job-Search E-Mail"
CareerJournal.com (www.careerjournal.com)

McKay, Dawn Rosenberg
"Email Etiquette – Why Is It Important?
Your Guide to Career Planning (http://careerplanning.about.com)

Payne, Carrie
"E-mail Etiquette: A Quick Guide to Writing a Professional E-mail"
jobweb (www.jobweb.com)

"Email Etiquette – What Your Mom Never Told You"
PuterGeek.Com (www.putergeek.com)

Job Leads

CTC has been working on a list of resources for our DS clients. We have compiled the following list, but would welcome some input from graduates. If you have a resource to suggest, please send it to Amy at pittsa@state.gov.

Please note that this list does not include job boards which deal exclusively in IT security.

American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) – www.asisonline.org
· International organization for professionals responsible for security, offers professional development/educational opportunities and *Security Management* magazine
· Job board available to members only

American Society for Law Enforcement Training – www.aslet.org
· Dedicated to enhancing and promoting excellence in law enforcement training while increasing

Job Leads continued....

the effectiveness of member to better serve their communities
· Free job board

Association of Former Intelligence Officers – www.afio.com
· Nonprofit association of former intelligence professionals and supporters dedicated to educating public about intelligence and the need for it to serve our country.
· Provides employment support to members and has a free but very limited job board

The Blue Line – www.theblueline.com
· Job board with annual subscription fee (a few jobs can be viewed for free)
· Vacancies listed appear primarily uniformed law enforcement, but some corporate and university jobs listed

ClearanceJobs.com – www.clearancejobs.com
· Recruiter that matches job seekers that hold active or current Department of Defense, Department of State, and Department of Energy security clearances to hiring employers and recruiters looking for skilled cleared candidates
· Free job board
· security vacancies listed appear to be primarily IT security jobs

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) –

International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators – www.iaclea.org
· Free job board, including jobs at educational facilities

International Association of Chiefs of Police – www.theiacp.org
· Nonprofit organization of police executives with > 19,000 member in > 89 countries
· Free job board on site, most vacancies listed include hyperlinks to employer's website

International Association of Professional Security Consultants – www.iapsc.org
· Calls itself a "consulting association" with rigorous membership requirements
· Offers a directory of consultants on security topics

International Homicide Investigators Association – www.ihia.org
· Supports law enforcement agencies and professionals by providing leadership, training, resources, and expertise to enhance their ability to solve cases

International Police Association – www.ipa-iac.org and www.ipa-usa.org
· Association of members of the police service committed to the principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with member ship > 300,000 in 58 countries; appears to be more a networking group than a formal professional association

LawEnforcementJobs.com – www.lawenforcementjobs.com
· Free job board for all types of security specialties
· Search engine difficult to use, easier to scroll down all jobs
· You can request free e-mail notifications of vacancies, but you cannot narrow them down by specialty

National Sheriffs' Association – www. sheriffs.org
· A nonprofit organization of professionals in criminal justice
· Free job board and e-mail notifications
· You can post your resume on this site

911hotjobs Employment Portal – www.911hotjobs.com
· Free job board
· law enforcement vacancies listed appear to

Job Leads continued....

be primarily uniformed law enforcement jobs
· Also offers books, test preparation materials, and online networking

Security Jobs Network – www.securityjobs.net
· Job board sponsored by SMR (see above)
· Charge for subscription, short-term subscriptions are available

Security Jobs Today – www.securityjobstoday.com
· Free job board
· You can post your resume on this site

Security Management Resources, Inc. – www.smrgroup.org
· An international executive search firm

SSR Personnel – www.jobs-in-security.com or www.ssr-personnel.com
· Recruiters for U.S. and UK companies, security professionals are only one specialty for which they recruit
· Job board includes only the vacancies they

are contracted to search for
· Vacancies include permanent, parttime, and temporary positions

ATTENTION JSP GRADS!

Next Job Fair
The next CTC Job Fair will be held on March 29, 2005 from 1 to 4 pm in the Field House at the Shultz Center.

Guidance Requested
Please let Amy know of any professional organizations for public affairs professionals. She is trying to develop a list of job search resources for our PD clients and could **_really_** use your help. You can contact her at e-mail pittsa@state.gov or telephone 703-302-7412.

CTC NEWSLETTER
FSI/TC/CTC
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.
20522-4201

Editor: Amy Pitts
Telephone: 703-302-7412
Facsimile: 703-302-7416
E-mail: *pittsa@state.gov*